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## PREFACE

The power to investigate ranks among the U.S. Senate's highest responsibilities. As James Madison reasoned in *The Federalist Papers*: "If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels governed men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: You must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place, oblige it to control itself." It is precisely for the purposes of government controlling itself that Congress investigates.

A century after Madison, another thoughtful authority on Congress, Woodrow Wilson, judged the "vigilant oversight of administration" to be as important as legislation. Wilson argued that because self-governing people needed to be fully informed in order to cast their votes wisely, the information resulting from a Congressional investigation might be "even more important than legislation." Congress, he said, was the "eyes and the voice" of the nation.

In 1948, the Senate established the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations to continue the work of a special committee, first chaired by Missouri Senator Harry Truman, to investigate the national defense program during World War II. Over the next half century, the Subcommittee under our predecessor Chairmen, Senators John McClellan, Henry Jackson, Sam Nunn, William Roth, and John Glenn, conducted a broad array of hard-hitting investigations into allegations of corruption and malfeasance, leading repeatedly to the exposure of wrongdoing and to the reform of government programs.

The phase of the Subcommittee's history from 1953 to 1954, when it was chaired by Joseph McCarthy, however, is remembered differently. Senator McCarthy's zeal to uncover subversion and espionage led to disturbing excesses. His browbeating tactics destroyed careers of people who were not involved in the infiltration of our government. His freewheeling style caused both the Senate and the Subcommittee to revise the rules governing future investigations, and prompted the courts to act to protect the Constitutional rights of witnesses at Congressional hearings. Senator McCarthy's excesses culminated in the televised Army-McCarthy hearings of 1954, following which the Senate voted overwhelmingly for his censure.

Under Senate provisions regulating investigative records, the records of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations are deposited in the National Archives and sealed for fifty years, in part to protect the privacy of the many witnesses who testified in closed executive sessions. With the half century mark here relative to the

executive session materials of the McCarthy subcommittee, we requested that the Senate Historical Office prepare the transcripts for publication, to make them equally accessible to students and the general public across the nation. They were edited by Dr. Donald A. Ritchie, with the assistance of Beth Bolling and Diane Boyle, and with the cooperation of the staff of the Center for Legislative Archives at the National Archives and Records Administration.

These hearings are a part of our national past that we can neither afford to forget nor permit to reoccur.

CARL LEVIN,

*Chairman.*

SUSAN M. COLLINS,

*Ranking Member.*

*Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations.*